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ABSTRACT

There was some concern that Holland's Self Directed Search for Educational and Vocational Planning (SDS) was inappropriate to use with blacks since it may steer them toward more Realistic occupations not requiring a college education. The purpose of the study was to compare the pattern of vocational planning choices for black and white students and to determine student satisfaction with SDS results. The SDS was administered to 143 blacks during freshman orientation and their results were compared to a random sample of whites. Results indicated that blacks tended to choose Social occupations more often, compared to more Realistic and Investigative choices by whites. That blacks tend to seek social service occupations has been demonstrated in several other studies. There were no difference in satisfaction with SDS results between blacks and whites. Implications for counseling blacks were discussed and the study concluded that the SDS was equally appropriate for blacks and whites. (Author)

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SUMMARY

There was some initial concern that Holland's Self Directed Search for Educational and Vocational Planning (SDS) was inappropriate to use with blacks since it may steer them toward more Realistic occupations not requiring a college education. The purpose of the study was to compare the pattern of vocational planning choices for black and white students and to determine student satisfaction with SDS results. The SDS was administered to 143 blacks during freshman orientation and their results were compared to a random sample of whites. Results indicated that blacks tended to choose Social occupations more often, compared to more Realistic and Investigative choices by whites. That blacks tend to seek social service occupations has been demonstrated in several other studies. There were no difference in satisfaction with SDS results between blacks and whites. Implications for counseling blacks were discussed and the study concluded that the SDS was equally appropriate for blacks or whites.

"The Self-Directed Search (SDS) is a self-administered, self-scored, and self-interpreted vocational counseling tool" (Holland, 8 p.3). The instrument is thought by Holland to have two primary objectives: (1) to allow a counselor to serve many more people with educational-vocational problems; and (2) to "provide a vocational counseling experience for people who do not have access to professional counselors, or who cannot afford their services" (Holland, 8 p.3). The SDS is composed of two booklets, one of which is the self-administering instrument itself and the other is a list of occupations coded with three letters according to Holland's personality theory (Holland, 7). The examinee fills out the former booklet to the best of his ability and obtains a three letter code which is then compared to the occupations listed in the Occupational Classification Booklet which are keyed with the same three letters.

The validity of the SDS is based on Holland's six personality types (Holland, 6): Realistic, Investigative, Artistic, Social, Enterprising, and Conventional. Through the use of five test sections (Occupational Daydreams, Activities, Competencies, Occupations, and Self-Estimates) Holland attempts to form a code of three of the six personality types which best expresses the subject's interests and experiences. Holland (8) provided reliability coefficients (KR 20) for individual scales ranging from .53 to .87 for men and women. O'Connell and Sedlacek (9) provided test-retest reliabilities of summary codes over a 7-10 month period for 65 college freshmen of .75 (Pearson), .92 (Spearman Rho) and .87 (average common elements).

Of many possible questions regarding the SDS, perhaps most important is its impact on the person completing the instrument. Since many people will take the SDS without the aid of a counselor or any professional person, what effect will the information have on the respondent? Of particular concern is the effect on black students considering or about to enter college. If we assume the task of counseling is in part to help people overcome handicaps or deterrents in their

backgrounds, so that their optimal potential can be reached, we have a possible problem with the SDS. Since the SDS relies on past experience (particularly in its Competencies section) it may serve to reinforce the student's background rather than to help him through educational or vocational experiences. Recent literature on the importance of a positive self concept for blacks (e.g. Epps 3, Hodgkins and Stakenas 5, and DiCesare, Sedlacek and Brooks 2) makes the Competencies and Self Estimates sections of the SDS worthy of examination. Despite talk of great change, few blacks are entering the large predominantly white universities (4% in 1970; Sedlacek, Brooks and Horowitz, 10) and the adjustment problems faced by blacks at these institutions are great (DiCesare, Sedlacek and Brooks, 2).

Preliminary use of the SDS with incoming freshmen at the University of Maryland led to speculation that it may be inappropriate to use with black students for reasons cited above. Specifically it seemed that blacks were getting a disproportionately high percentage of Realistic codes and were more dissatisfied with SDS results than white students. The SDS manual lists many Realistic occupations that clearly require less than a college education (e.g., bricklayer, elevator operator).

The purpose of this study was to compare the pattern of vocational planning choices made by black and white students as measured by the SDS, and to determine student satisfaction with SDS results.

Procedure

Subjects:

During the summer of 1970 the SDS was administered to 4,631 incoming freshmen at the University of Maryland, College Park, including 143 blacks[1]. A sample of 143 nonblacks was randomly drawn for purposes of comparison.

[1] identified by the Cultural Study Center racial census

Since more than 96% of nonblacks at the University are white they will be called so throughout this study.

Comparisons:

Three comparisons were made. Initially, the first, second and third choice summary codes (one of Holland's six types) were compared using chi square. Second, the summary codes were again compared using chi square except the Competencies section was omitted in the scoring. Third, the two groups were compared (using t) on responses to a Likert type item on a five point scale which was added at the end of the SDS: "My summary code occupations seem reasonable for me."

Results

Tables 1A, 1B and 1C show first, second and third choice SDS summary codes for blacks and whites. The largest difference seems to be a greater number of first choice Social summary codes for blacks compared to more Realistic and Investigative first choices by whites. Tables 2A, 2B and 2C show the first, second and third choice summary codes without scoring the Competencies section of the SDS. Results appear similar to the choices shown in Tables 1A, 1B and 1C; indicating dropping the Competencies section made little difference in obtained summary codes. Table 3 shows the means and standard deviations on the satisfaction item. Results indicate no differences between blacks and whites on satisfaction with summary codes.

Discussion

The results clearly indicate that blacks do not obtain more Realistic summary codes than whites; in fact, whites had more first choice Realistic codes than blacks. Additionally the Competencies section did not seem to affect obtained summary codes for blacks and whites. Also blacks and whites were equally

satisfied with their codes, so reactions of students to their codes was not differentiated by race. Thus the liklihood of having the SDS result in a different channeling or self counseling for blacks and whites is considerably lessened.

Of particular interest is the finding that blacks tended to have more first choice Social codes. Bayer and Boruch (1) found that blacks were more likely to seek social service occupations than were whites. Hager and Elton (4) found that black males expressed more interest in social service on the Strong Vocational Interest Blank than did white males. The SDS appears to yield similar results.

Several potential limitations of the study should be noted. First, many blacks participating in the Intensive Educational Development (IED)* program did not go through the regular orientation program and did not take the SDS. More people in the IED group may need counseling and hence be subject to some of the precautions with the SDS noted in the introduction. Participants in the IED program are nearly all black although overall, blacks at the University have a wide range of backgrounds and characteristics (Van Arsdale, Sedlacek and Brooks,11). Thus use of the SDS with lower socioeconomic level groups should be further researched, although Hager and Elton (4) found greater social service interests for lower socioeconomic blacks than for similar whites.

Another variable worth more careful study in relation to the SDS is sex. Bayer and Boruch (1) report occupational interests varying by sex and Hager and Elton (4) limited their study to males. The current study did not differentiate the groups by sex although both black and white students are about 55% male at the University (Van Arsdale, et.al, 11), so this should not have affected the overall group comparisons.

* IED is a program of counseling, tutoring and financial aid for lower socioeconomic level students.

One last methodological point is the problem of ties with the SDS. On the SDS itself Holland recommends recording all tied codes. For purposes of analysis this lends some amount of nonindependence of observations summarized across a group. What effect this may have had on the results of this study is not known.

However considering all the evidence in this study it appears the SDS is equally appropriate for blacks or whites.

TABLE 1A

First Choice SDS Summary Codes*

	REAL	INV	ART	SOC	ENT	CON	TOTAL
Blacks	2	32	25	82	10	12	163
Whites	16	45	21	66	9	3	160
Total	18	77	46	148	19	15	331

chi square significant beyond .05

TABLE 1B

Second Choice SDS Summary Codes*

	REAL	INV	ART	SOC	ENT	CON	TOTAL
Blacks	30	29	28	36	25	21	169
Whites	21	36	26	41	26	15	165
Total	51	65	54	77	51	36	334

chi square not significant beyond .05

TABLE 1C

Third Choice SDS Summary Codes*

	REAL	INV	ART	SOC	ENT	CON	TOTAL
Blacks	14	27	34	10	43	19	147
Whites	17	27	36	20	50	25	175
Total	31	54	70	30	93	44	322

chi square significant beyond .05

* Totals add to more than 286 due to ties (see SDS manual).

TABLE 2A

First Choice Summary Code Without Competencies Section *

	REAL	INV	ART	SOC	ENT	CON	TOTAL
Blacks	6	28	28	66	8	9	145
Whites	19	39	24	58	14	6	160
Total	25	67	52	124	22	15	305

chi square significant beyond .05

TABLE 2B

Second Choice Summary Code Without Competencies Section *

	REAL	INV	ART	SOC	ENT	CON	TOTAL
Blacks	28	26	31	41	25	17	168
Whites	18	30	37	40	27	12	164
Total	46	56	68	81	52	29	332

chi square not significant beyond .05

TABLE 2C

Third Choice Summary Code Without Competencies Section *

	REAL	INV	ART	SOC	ENT	CON	TOTAL
Blacks	17	36	29	13	37	31	163
Whites	27	30	28	27	48	32	192
Total	44	66	57	40	85	63	355

chi square not significant beyond .05

TABLE 3

Means and Standard Deviations of Responses to Item
"My Summary Code Occupations Seem Reasonable For Me" **

	MEAN	S.D.	N
Blacks	2.76	1.01	139
Whites	2.67	1.06	138

t not significant at .05 level

* Totals add to more than 286 due to ties (see SDS manual)
** 1=Strongly Agree; 5=Strongly Disagree

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